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President: Mr. Munir (Vice-President) ..... (Pakistan)

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In the absence of Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Mr. Munir (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 8: Integration segment

Opening of the segment

1. **The President**, opening the integration segment of the Economic and Social Council, said that the theme of the 2017 segment was "Making eradication of poverty an integral objective of all policies: what will it take?". That theme was aligned with the overall focus of the 2017 session of the Council on "Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges".

2. Quoting Nelson Mandela, he said that massive poverty and obscene inequality were the contemporary equivalents of slavery and apartheid. Since Mandela's time, global domestic product had increased by almost 30 per cent and international trade and foreign direct investment had nearly doubled. More than one billion people had been lifted out of extreme poverty and advancements in primary school enrolment had led to a net enrolment rate exceeding 90 per cent. Significant progress had been made in terms of women's empowerment and closing gender disparities. In addition, the world had seen a dramatic decline in preventable child deaths, improved maternal health, decreasing HIV infections in many parts of the word and the halting or reversing of malaria and tuberculosis trends. In 2015, 91 per cent of the global population had access to improved drinking water.

3. Despite such achievements, however, significant differences at the regional, national and even subnational levels still remained. More than 800 million people lived below the international poverty line of $1.90 a day and 10 per cent of workers and their families remained poor despite employment. Significant gaps still remained with regard to gender, race, disability and informal employment.

4. Given that the interconnected nature of the three dimensions of sustainable development was a central feature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, integrated policy frameworks would be necessary for its achievement. As a multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue on the challenges, opportunities and lessons learned, the 2017 Integration Segment would seek to provide guidance for policy formulation to promote the balanced integration of all aspects of sustainable development. The Segment was a timely opportunity to assess the status of integration and coherence of actions on the Sustainable Development Goals at the national, regional and international levels in advance of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the high-level segment of the Council.

5. The theme of the current Segment was a perfect example of the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Goals and the need for integrated policies to achieve them. Poverty was a complex, multidimensional phenomenon that encompassed the three dimensions of sustainable development; eradicating it in a sustainable and irreversible manner would thus require addressing all dimensions. Best practices and lessons learnt must be gathered at all levels, including by discussing the cross-border nature of natural resource management and the connection between the preservation of natural resources and the well-being and livelihood of local communities. During the segment, national experiences would be presented by Governments and other stakeholders with operations at the national level. The Segment would moreover discuss how to translate the 2030 Agenda into national policies; as policies could have both direct and indirect effects on poverty outcomes, poverty eradication objectives must be a crosscutting concern of public policies. Special attention would be paid to the particular opportunities and challenges of the African continent, which included the majority of the least developed countries. It was hoped that the segment would produce integrated policy solutions for poverty eradication that were creative, actionable and sustainable.

6. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh), Acting President of the General Assembly, speaking on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, said that while strong progress had been made in recent decades to eradicate the scourge of poverty, success had not been universally shared: sub-Saharan Africa was still home to more than half of the world's population living in extreme poverty. Eradicating poverty was therefore an essential component of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Efforts to eradicate poverty must also ensure that hard-won development gains were resilient and not easily swept away by external shocks, crises or diseases. Eradicating poverty would require all stakeholders to engage in new ways of thinking, partnering, financing and delivering, based on local needs on the ground.

7. The United Nations must pursue an integrated and cross-cutting approach to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Next, it must mainstream sustainable poverty eradication and scale up system-wide efforts to support achievement of the Goals. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes

must support national efforts to build sustainable peace and to promote good governance, the rule of law, gender equality and social inclusion. Ways to enhance policy coherence and operational coordination between development, peace and humanitarian actors, both at Headquarters and in the field, must be envisioned. Inclusive and strategic partnerships must be built that included all sectors and levels of the United Nations, government, civil society, international financial institutions, the private sector and community groups to leverage comparative advantages. Women and girls, young people, minority groups and marginalized communities must also be engaged. The reform of the United Nations development system was a critical opportunity to address many of the issues hindering poverty eradication. The international community must deliver in full on its official development assistance commitments.

8. There could be no sustainable development without sustainable peace and vice versa. It was vital to prioritize poverty eradication in order to achieve a safe, prosperous and sustainable future for all.

9. **Ms. Mohammed** (Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations) said that the Integration Segment would provide crucial insights to help transform the 2030 Agenda into reality by achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at the country level.

10. Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, especially extreme poverty, was the most urgent global challenge to achieving sustainable development. One in eight people lived on less than $2 a day, and many who had escaped extreme poverty remained very close to the poverty line. Poverty was increasingly concentrated in regions and groups, trapping multiple generations in a vicious cycle. Goal 1 was therefore to end all forms of poverty everywhere. To achieve that Goal, it was necessary to recognize the multi-dimensional nature of poverty as well as its interlinkages with human and environmental health and inequality both within and among countries. Addressing poverty eradication, as well as the related issues of climate change, food insecurity and the sluggish and unpredictable global economy required integrated responses and engagement by a wide range of actors, including Governments from both the North and South, civil society and businesses.

11. In order to translate the 2030 Agenda to the national level, complex policy interlinkages as well as the root causes of poverty must be addressed, while prioritizing marginalized and vulnerable people. There was a need for investment that was commensurate with the scale of the challenge at hand.

12. The Integration Segment was an opportunity to see how national approaches and the recently adopted lists of Sustainable Development Goal indicators could support each other in an integrated implementation process. The ambition of the United Nations development system when implementing the 2030 Agenda should match the goals set by Member States themselves; the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was welcome as a chance to align the development system with national implementations.

13. The focus of the Integration Segment should be on providing specific technical guidance to the high-level political forum and on how to support national implementation of the 2030 Agenda through results-oriented approaches. Options were needed that would allow policymakers at all levels to foster coherent and integrated actions to eradicate poverty and implement the Goals at the country level.

14. **Ms. Banda** (former President of the Republic of Malawi), delivering a keynote address, said that although universal progress had been achieved with regard to inclusion and poverty eradication, a growing imbalance remained. Half of all people who lived below the poverty line could be found in sub-Saharan Africa, and 80 per cent of those Africans lived in agricultural areas; 50 per cent were under the age of 14. Moreover, the fact was often overlooked that more than half of the poor in sub-Saharan Africa were likely to be women. Consequently, achieving gender equality and empowering youth would be crucial for African prosperity. Poverty was not caused just by an absence of resources, but by structural problems in a society that was currently designed to disempower and disadvantage women. For example, in African food production, women often produced, harvested, stored and cooked the food, but ate last and least.

15. Studies had shown that when women were given the tools to succeed economically, they had a broad impact on the well-being of their households and larger communities. Policymakers and leaders must respect and include both women and the larger rural communities that represented the bulk of Africa's disadvantaged people. Solutions must be developed on the ground rather than imposed from above.

16. As President of Malawi, she had established the Presidential Initiative for Maternal Health and Safe Motherhood, a programme that had involved officials from the Ministry of Health, traditional birth attendants, local chiefs and the community in maternal health matters; the programme had seen a 30 per cent reduction in maternal mortality in two years. The National Association of Business Women, which she

had likewise founded in 1989, provided one of the most successful illustrations of how households were transformed when women were economically empowered. The impact study conducted ten years later by the USID Foundation had found that 73 per cent of households had moved out of poverty and 40 per cent had shifted from informal employment to small and medium-sized enterprise. When income entered households through women, the benefits were distributed to all members of the family and the community at large. It was urgent to support and promote African women to become political leaders.

17. Of the 200 million Africans between the ages of 15 and 24, if current trends continued, most would be uneducated, unemployed, unhealthy and frustrated. Through its five pillars of increasing household income through women, supporting education for girls, promoting maternal health and addressing HIV/AIDS, encouraging leadership and defending human rights, the Joyce Banda Foundation gave such youth a fair chance at succeeding.

18. Political will was the most critical element lacking in addressing Africa's challenges, which included the world's fastest growing youth population, highest rate of working poverty and largest youth population willing to move permanently for employment. Africa also had low levels of female education and some of the highest rates of malnutrition, epidemics, and child and maternal mortality. Investing in human capital, especially women and youth, was crucial to eradicating poverty in Africa and driving inclusive growth.

19. More attention must be paid to girls between the ages of 0 and 10. Although resources currently existed to address the issues of girls aged 10 to 14, that was too late to address a number of problems related to nutrition, deformity, defilement, child labour, harmful traditions and educational discrimination.

20. In resource-rich countries, the reinvestment of natural resource revenues in education and health care could allow societies to graduate to post-industrialization. Policymakers must focus on education and health care in Africa, especially for youth, girls and other vulnerable people. Curricula, including vocational and technical training, must be adapted to accelerate inclusive and self-reliant growth and reflect the current job market by focusing on science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship. Education should also include a civil component, so that citizens could know their rights and responsibilities and hold their political leaders accountable. Easy access should be provided to scholarships and microcredits.

21. Political leadership must be action-oriented, accountable, inclusive and transparent. It was the responsibility of leaders to ensure that citizens felt engaged in the management of natural resources. Currently, mistrust reigned and the average person did not see the point of managing natural resources whose wealth accrued only to a small elite. Botswana was an example of a country that had successfully transitioned from using its natural resources as a source of conflict to a source of prosperity. Malawi had implemented cash transfer programmes to try to increase transparency in natural resource management. She called on the Council and the United Nations to hold leaders accountable, ensuring that they did not plunder what belonged to the people.

22. **Mr. Saqib** (founder, Akhuwat), also delivering a keynote address, said that the nature and scope of poverty must be fully understood because it could be tackled. Traditionally, poverty had been quantified by food energy intake and the cost of basic needs. However, the well-being of a population depended on many variables, not all of which could be improved by higher income and consumption. If per capita income in a neighbourhood increased, but there were no schools or hospitals available, for instance, poverty would not be alleviated. Therefore, per capita income must be supplemented by other measures that addressed housing, the provision of public goods, life expectancy, security, self-respect and dignity. The Human Development Index, developed in Pakistan, was one such multidimensional framework.

23. Poverty eradication must become a priority and an integral part of all policies. With the Pakistan Vision 2025 programme, his country had reaffirmed the need to make economic growth both inclusive and sustainable. Pakistan had recently launched a multidimensional poverty index that targeted education, health and living standards with 15 indicators. Policymaking was gradually changing in the country, due to an increased focus on identifying vulnerabilities at both the individual and community level and the need for customized, holistic solutions. Various programmes for poverty alleviation were being strengthened and brought under one umbrella. There was growing awareness of the need to move from universal subsidies to well-designed and targeted interventions, while abandoning stereotypical solutions and favouring innovative, technology-conscious approaches.

24. One such innovative model was Akhuwat, a microfinance programme that he had designed 16 years earlier on the basis of a participatory development approach. Akhuwat was now the largest Islamic microfinance institution in the world, providing over $400 million as interest-free microcredit to 1.8 million families across Pakistan. The average loan amount was $200 and the institution had an enviable recovery rate of 99.9 per cent. Akhuwat adopted a holistic approach to development that encouraged empowerment and self-reliance through entrepreneurship. The organization believed that high interest rates exacerbated the plight of the poor. It operated through religious sites, revitalizing their historical role in bonding communities and promoting interfaith harmony. Akhuwat was based on the spirit of volunteerism and mutual support; it encouraged borrowers to donate to the fund once they had achieved economic stability, thus creating a virtuous cycle. The organization prohibited discrimination based on caste, race, creed, faith or gender.

25. Akhuwat's enviable recovery percentage reflected its belief in the integrity of the poor when helped with dignity. The organization operated in 400 cities in Pakistan and would soon open branches in Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria. Poverty extended beyond a mere lack of financial resources. In order to achieve a poverty-free society based on the principles of compassion and equity, the most marginalized must be included. People in poverty were not generally responsible for their own condition, as structural factors were often at play — a realization that was often missing at the policymaking and implementation level.

26. A long-term sustainable solution to poverty required a focus on education, a tool with irreversible impact. Consequently, Akhuwat had launched a number of no-fee schools, colleges and universities and developed a public-private partnership with the federal Government of Pakistan, as well as many state governments. Akhuwat's story must be shared to reiterate the need for cross-cutting integrated solutions to poverty eradication that emphasized inclusiveness, accountability and the transformation of sociopolitical norms.

27. **Mr. Bah** (Youth Representative, High-level Steering Committee of the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative), also delivering a keynote address, said that throughout his work as a youth leader, education advocate and champion for girls, he often confronted the question of why entrenched, endemic poverty existed. Nelson Mandela had said that poverty was not natural, but man-made, and as such could be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. That realization was both comforting and depressing, especially given that the conditions endured by over 1.2 billion people in the world had often been created by slavery, colonization, plunder, patriarchy and discrimination. Tackling poverty in a sustainable and integrated way would require dismantling structural inequalities, as well as the current global economic system that privileged business over labour. Poverty could not be eradicated simply through policy changes, even with the best possible governments. The current global power structure, which put a premium on race, nationality, ethnicity and gender over shared humanity, must be re-examined.

28. The world needed an education revolution. Nearly one billion people had begun the twenty-first century unable to read and write: while major gains had been made, much more remained to be done to ensure that illiteracy was ended within one generation. The education revolution should also prioritize global citizenship and take advantage of technological advances to activate a global civil society that was committed to the values that defined the United Nations: a commitment to equality, justice and humans rights for all.

29. Every single decision must have real people at its core. A girl born in Sierra Leone had only one in ten chances of making it through secondary school. One in five girls would be married by age 15 and half by age 18. Girls in Sierra Leone had no female teachers or mentors; if they lived in rural areas, they often had no access to electricity. Denied access to contraceptives, girls would often have children, then be forced to exchange their bodies to feed their children, and in turn have more children. Without access to good nutrition or education, those children would continue the cycle of poverty. Only by keeping real people and issues at the centre of each policy could the international community relegate poverty to the trash bin of history.

30. A video presentation on the importance of an integrated approach was shown.

Panel discussion: An integrated agenda towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1

31. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica), moderator, said that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development maintained that poverty was more than a simple lack of income. With some 480 million working poor in the world, policy approaches to poverty eradication must be integrated to account for deprivations in the social, economic, environmental and political dimensions of

poverty. The United Nations development system had a role to play in moving towards integrated decision-making and policy design in order to meet the demands of the ambitious agenda adopted by Member States.

32. **Mr. Cruz Sánchez** (Head of Office, Planning and International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico), panellist, accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that Mexico had created a national council on sustainable development to coordinate the work of various agencies to implement the 2030 Agenda, which served as a roadmap towards a more just, prosperous and inclusive society. From 2000 to 2015, the world had achieved the highest poverty reduction rate in human history, with over one billion people being lifted out of extreme poverty. His Government's poverty reduction policy entailed taking actions to strengthen its institutional framework, grounded in a rights-based approach; taking cross-cutting and vertical measures around clear, measurable goals; and targeting resources and taking advantage of local capacities in a manner that fostered citizen ownership of policy by ensuring transparency and accountability. The 2030 Agenda provided an incentive for his Government to continue improving the quality of life of its people, placing dignity and equity at the centre of social policy.

33. Poverty eradication required a paradigm shift from assistance-based support and patronage to enabling citizens to exercise the social rights enshrined in the Mexican Constitution by guaranteeing a minimum level of well-being for all. To that end, his Government had worked to consolidate successful cooperation and coordination among all relevant stakeholders in order to reduce inequality by targeting its resources and efforts; its national strategy on inclusion, which brought together 16 Government ministries, civil society organizations, businesses, academics and citizens, was one such initiative. Such coordination required improved planning, execution and assessment of actions to reduce poverty. To that end, Mexico was working with the World Bank on the construction of an integrated social information system that would serve as a single, accessible repository of information on potential and existing beneficiaries of social programmes. Given that such factors as low productivity, wage inequality and public insecurity lay beyond the scope of social policy, States had an obligation to enact inclusive, integrated policies. In that connection, Mexico pledged its full support to the Council in its efforts to implement and integrate the 2030 Agenda.

34. **Ms. Akhtar** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)), panellist, said that in order to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development smoothly and effectively, a holistic approach must be taken and the risks associated with globalization must be managed, including by promoting multilateralism as an anchor of global governance in order to regain the momentum of growth and trade. Poverty reduction in the Asia-Pacific region had largely resulted from high growth rates. Given their long-standing affiliation and proximity with economy and planning ministries, regional commissions were uniquely placed to assess how to promote integration, inclusivity and policy coherence. Intergovernmental and multisectoral platforms known as regional sustainable development forums had recently been established with a mandate to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

35. Member States from the Asia-Pacific region had formally agreed on a road map for their implementation. Its progress notwithstanding, the region remained home to 400 million poor. However, exclusive reliance on income to assess poverty had led to an underestimation of the obstacles to poverty eradication. Capturing the interlinked complexities of poverty, the multidimensional poverty index offered a comprehensive perspective of the magnitude of poverty. Using the index as a basis, the number of poor in the Asia-Pacific region rose to 900 million.

36. Substantive progress had been made towards formulating national development strategies, plans and budgets in line with the Goals and establishing coordinating institutional mechanisms. Nevertheless, substantive investments were still needed to develop the analytical frames that would promote sustainable development more effectively by exploiting and managing the interdependence, interlinkages and integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions. Doing so would, in turn, require an assessment of the sectoral or subsectoral policy tradeoffs and their implications within the three dimensions. The manner in which those dimensions and their multisectoral intersections and integration were managed to balance nature, economy, society and human well-being was central to sustainability. Nurturing the sectoral nexus to maximize the impact of development and promoting the efficient allocation and use of resources by changing incentives to alter consumption and production behaviour would enhance the impact of that sustainability.

37. By broadening the scope of integration, regional commissions had promoted cross-border connectivity, market integration and harmonized policy and regulatory frameworks across different sectors.

Improved regional coordination on macroeconomic questions would be vital. Regional cooperation and integration facilitated the implementation of transboundary Goals and fostered regional connectivity integration in a sustainable manner. While the multidimensional measurement of poverty captured the exclusion and marginalization of vulnerable groups, it was also critical to promote the institutionalization and coherence of strategies to reduce multidimensional poverty by using participatory approaches to promote integrated design, implementation and evaluation. Tapping the potential of integration would require, inter alia, promoting inter-sectoral policy and investment cooperation; formulating frameworks that integrated ecosystem services, environmental footprints, the human-nature nexus and planetary boundaries; and recognizing and quantifying the effects and the spatial and temporal implications of system-wide integration.

38. Integration must be promoted in order to enhance inclusivity, policy coherence and consistency while managing the broader sectoral and policy frameworks, with a view to maximizing the impact of development efforts. Regional commissions had a significant role to play in promoting integration through the development of common methodologies and tools to promote synergies in factor production use. Lastly, integration debates must extend to transboundary goals, which promoted different types of regional connectivity and had the potential to promote the development of sustainable corridors.

39. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica) said that relying exclusively on income as a measure of poverty severely underestimated the extent of the problem. As an upper-middle-income country, Jamaica had real problems of intra-country income inequality. For years, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean had been advocating a structural gap approach that took into account not only income per capita but also levels of investment, savings, innovation and expenditure on such social issues as health and education.

40. **Ms. Berar-Awad** (Director of the Employment Policy Department, International Labour Organization (ILO)), panellist, said that no matter how central employment was to development and poverty eradication, mere access to jobs did not suffice to lift people out of poverty. On the positive side, the persistence of complex employment challenges was prompting many countries to formulate comprehensive employment policies from an integrated perspective. The lessons learned from the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth and a multi-stakeholder initiative on jobs for peace demonstrated the need for policy coherence in terms of content, ownership on the part of decision-makers involved in integrating policy strategies and institutional innovation, coordination, implementation and monitoring.

41. With respect to employment policies, it had become accepted that employment could no longer be regarded as a residual or automatic outcome of economic growth. Instead, a proactive approach must be taken in order to integrate goals and targets into national development plans and to put in place programmes and policies to achieve them, analyzing the coherence between macroeconomic frameworks, sectoral and investment strategies and supply-side initiatives. Such initiatives could include investments that targeted disadvantaged groups in the labour market with support programmes.

42. The quality and quantity of jobs constituted yet other aspects of integration. A rights-based approach would ensure that those employed — including the self-employed — would receive social protection and a living wage that enabled them to lift themselves out of poverty. Moreover, another important facet of integration involved creating an environment conducive to private sector investment in coherent strategies and the public policies to incentivize public-private partnerships in creating decent jobs. While integrating the many variables would be no easy task, several experiences illustrated that obstacles could be overcome. Broad-based participation, dialogue and consultation among the various stakeholders must take place before formulating and implementing a policy. Despite its difficulties, dialogue brought together different viewpoints and remained the best way to reach a common understanding on priority areas for integrated action.

43. Policy integration also required institutional innovation and coordination. Several countries had established policy coordination mechanisms on employment policy that brought together Government agencies, ministries of economy, finance, labour and social affairs, central banks and workers' organizations, among others. Such mechanisms operated better when they had oversight from the office of the president or prime minister, indicating genuine political commitment at the highest levels of Government.

44. Noting the difficulty of working concurrently towards such objectives as reducing inequality, improving resilience and livelihood and eradicating poverty, she stressed that employment policy should target not only economic aspects but social protection

for the employed and the unemployed, with a view to establishing baseline levels of job security. Policy integration must encompass a focus on people trapped in the informal employment-poverty nexus, with jobs, businesses or self-employment ventures that did not allow them to make significant improvements in their lives and societies. In that connection, she drew attention to the recently adopted ILO recommendation No. 204 concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy which provided guidance around integrated strategies, highlighting the nexus of economic and productivity improvement, access to rights, access to social protection and a greater emphasis on the compliance culture.

45. Political commitment at the highest level, beyond election timelines, was the key to overcoming structural resistance to policy integration. Building the capacity of actors able to play a role in policy integration must be prioritized and invested in, with continuous monitoring and feedback from policy implementation to policy formulation. Lastly, tools must be placed at the disposal of policymakers in order to enable them to make informed choices. New pro-employment budgeting tools were being developed and launched. Policy coherence amongst the international community could also go a long way in supporting policy integration at the country level.

46. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica) said that the dilemma faced by countries including his own — required by the international financial institutions to pursue a macroeconomic policy characterized by extreme fiscal consolidation but also urged to mobilize domestic resources and invest them in various areas in order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals — underscored the practical difficulty of policy coherence.

47. **Mr. Vaughan** (President and Chief Executive Officer, International Institute for Sustainable Development), panellist, said that poverty reduction and sustainable development were inseparable. Hunger was a central aspect of poverty. With 20 million people in four countries facing famine, increasing urgent spending to save lives was an immediate priority. In addition, some 793 million people lacked sufficient food for a healthy and active life. The devastation wrought by food insecurity on infants and young children included such lasting effects as stunting and wasting. Investment in healthy food systems was needed to end both hunger and malnutrition.

48. His organization had estimated that an extra $11 billion of public spending each year until 2030 would meet Goal 2; as $4 billion would come from donors and the remainder from countries, the additional expenditure would require a mere 3 per cent increase in official development assistance. The funds would be allocated to increasing social safety nets, providing practical on-farm support, improving rural development planning, improving support for nutrition and education, and introducing legal, policy and institutional reforms.

49. Irrigation was a vital form of on-farm support, as the three most important global breadbaskets were already strained from over-pumping and depletion. There was therefore an urgent need to better manage and conserve freshwater. Furthermore, with climate change projections affecting hydrological tables in virtually every country, irrigation efficiency must be increased. Coupled with other farming practices, precision irrigation systems had doubled yields in certain crops while reducing overall water use in irrigation systems by between 25 and 40 per cent.

50. Many countries were creating national climate change adaptation plans and putting them into action, with agriculture as a priority sector. Work was also underway in applying climate-resilient seeds and adjusting to less water-intensive crops. Innovative approaches to climate financing were being developed under a number of international frameworks. International financial institutions, among others, would be expected to take the lead by providing support. Efforts to ensure transparency and inclusivity in natural resource development, initiatives to capture dimensions of comprehensive wealth per capita beyond income, and the use of information technology applications to build bridges and foster action to implement the Goals illustrated practical, constructive approaches to integration.

51. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica) said that the high rates of non-communicable diseases linked to diet illustrated the need for coherence between trade and health policies and investment in healthy food systems.

52. **Mr. Shepherd** (Director, Chronic Poverty Advisory Network), panellist, accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that his organization had posited in its report on eradicating extreme poverty that tackling chronic poverty, stopping impoverishment and sustaining people's escapes out of poverty were the three fundamental actions required to eradicate poverty. Its research had shown that impoverishment, both of the newly poor and of those who had previously escaped poverty, was surprisingly strong. As impoverishment detracted from the net poverty reduction — escapes from poverty minus impoverishment — it followed that reducing

impoverishment would increase the rate at which people escaped poverty.

53. Preventing impoverishment was an objective less well served by comprehensive policy initiatives, with social protection, universal health coverage and disaster risk management — each effective preventive measures — varying greatly. Achieving the three objectives would require, inter alia, massive investments in education and sexual and reproductive health measures. The experience of many people stuck in poverty highlighted its multidimensional nature and the many facets of disadvantage. Countries whose poverty reduction efforts had succeeded had employed a combination of measures, including constitutional reform, increased political participation and a mix of universal and affirmative actions.

54. Citing examples of economic growth that favoured the poorest, he noted that countries that had achieved such progress had focused on human development more than on poverty reduction with a focus on income. Specifically, a larger, targeted investment in early education provided children from the poorest households, which typically lacked such coverage, with a good start in school and improved retention rates. In addition, initiatives to bolster the link between schools, the labour market and associated investments in technical and vocational education would help.

55. Overall, greater integration was needed in efforts to translate economic expenditure into inclusive economic growth. In particular, linking social protection with various economic activities, such as increasing the reach of the banking system through Government-to-people transfers into bank accounts, could promote financial inclusion. Assisting non-farm business owners with solid disaster risk management would encourage them to take risks in investing. The concept of linking protection with enterprise development and economic growth was worth exploring, and its implementation would depend largely on Government effectiveness. Government expenditure per poor person varied widely from country to country, as did the progress achieved towards poverty eradication, with neither necessarily depending on the income of a given country.

56. **Mr. Palma Cerna** (Honduras) said that it was particularly important for middle-income countries, where the highest concentration of poverty was concentrated, to take other factors beyond income in addressing poverty and measuring development, as each country had its specific challenges. Honduras had opted for a multidimensional model that would enable it to be faithful to the principle of the indivisibility of the Goals. A year after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, he wondered what kind of mechanisms the United Nations development system intended to design and use to implement the Agenda in a multidimensional manner. Measuring poverty on the basis of income alone could conceal inequality in middle-income countries.

57. **Ms. Ha** Thi Thanh Huyen (Viet Nam) asked whether the Executive Secretary of ESCAP envisaged an expansion of the multidimensional poverty index beyond its current use to encompass such elements as vulnerability to climate change or employment. She would also like to know what its use by the United Nations system would look like.

58. **Mr. Shepherd** (Director, Chronic Poverty Advisory Network) said that his organization's policy guide on the experience of middle-income countries with poverty reduction had shown differences between East Asian and Latin American models of integration and sequencing of investments. In East Asia, the typical pattern had been one of massive investment in education and a strong emphasis on economic growth early on, followed by massive social protection and universal health investments 20 years later. In Latin America, expenditure had been more balanced and attended by lower rates of economic growth. Moreover, the two regions were a study in political contrasts.

59. While there was a continuing debate about the merits of the multidimensional approach to poverty versus that of the income-centred approach, any analysis of poverty and deprivation should elucidate their different dimensions. In that regard, the multidimensional approach was especially useful because it made it possible to examine different indicators and the relationship between them.

60. **Ms. Akhtar** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)) said that the appeal of the multidimensional poverty index resided in its relative simplicity. However, it was best to avoid excessive elaboration or expansion of that index because there was already an overwhelming amount of statistical activity underpinning the Sustainable Development Goals. In the Asia-Pacific region, only half of the Goal indicators were used, and the availability of data varied widely from region to region. Moreover, ESCAP had produced subcategories of indexes, including vulnerability, inclusiveness and climate vulnerability indexes, in order to get a sense of developments in the region. While she did recognize the value of the multidimensional index approach, it would be

important to understand its practical policy implications in order to avoid another pendulum swing, as well as to determine what purpose such indexes should ultimately serve.

61. **Ms. Berar-Awad** (Director of the Employment Policy Department, International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that one way of studying the various actions taken in support of the Sustainable Development Goals was to regard them as interrelated as were the Goals. The difference between the Sustainable Development Goals and the Millennium Development Goals was that the Sustainable Development Goals and their indicators were action-oriented; rather than examine results and statistics in isolation, the extent to which countries had adopted operational strategies in the relevant area was also assessed.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.